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Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF A LETTER FROM THE
PRESIDENT TO THE SPEAKER OF THE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the installation of a puppet government is an extremely serious threat to peace. It threatens vital U.S. security and foreign policy interests:

- It places the Soviets within aircraft striking range of the vital oil resources of the Persian Gulf;
- It threatens a strategically located country, Pakistan;
- It poses the prospect of increased Soviet pressure on Iran and on other nations in the Middle East;
- Above all, it shows that the Soviets will use force to take over a neighboring country.

The Soviet invasion requires a firm and vigorous response by the United States. We must make clear to the Soviet Union that it cannot trample on the independence of other states and at the same time carry on business as usual with the rest of the world.

I have therefore taken several measures. I have directed the Secretary of Commerce to restrict exports and re-exports of identified agricultural commodities from the United States to the U.S.S.R., except for exports of wheat and corn authorized under Article I of the Agreement on the Supply of Grain of October 20, 1975. These restrictions became effective January 7, 1980 under regulations issued by the Department of Commerce. The restrictions were initially made applicable to a broadly described group of agricultural commodities and products as a means of quickly achieving the objective of stopping exports of any items which are significant in terms of the grounds on which I acted. The Department of Commerce is revising the list to eliminate items for which controls are not warranted.

I have acted in the national security and foreign policy interests of the United States under the authority of the Export Administration Act of 1979. I transmit herewith my report pursuant to Sections 6(e) and 7(g)(3) of the Act.

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I have recognized that other countries are major exporters of agricultural commodities. At my direction, United States officials promptly began consultations with other major agricultural exporters to seek their cooperation in restricting exports in harmony with our actions. These consultations and negotiations have been fruitful and will continue. We have also consulted with U.S. farm organizations and trading companies, and these consultations have contributed valuable information concerning the domestic impact of these export restrictions, their adverse impact on the Soviet Union, and the availability of identified items from foreign sources. I have considered the possibility that some of the agricultural commodities involved might be obtained by the Soviet Union from other countries. I have also assessed the threat to our national security and foreign policy posed by the Soviet aggression and the consequences of a failure to take prompt and decisive action. I have determined pursuant to Section 4(c) of the Act that the absence of such controls would prove detrimental to the foreign policy and national security interests of the United States.

Pursuant to Section 6(d) of the Act, I have determined that although reasonable efforts have been made to achieve the purposes of these controls through alternative means, available alternatives would not comparably advance the foreign policy and national security interests of the United States.

I have also directed that the Secretary of Commerce, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense and other appropriate officials, review and revise our policy with respect to the export of high technology and other strategic items to the Soviet Union. This review is to proceed with the utmost urgency. Effective January 11, 1980 the Department of Commerce suspended all outstanding licenses and authorizations for exports to the Soviet Union and announced that it has suspended the issuance of new licenses and authorizations. The review I have directed will also consider what our policy should be on future applications for licenses, whether existing special licenses should be amended or revoked, and whether validated licenses should be required for any other exports currently permitted to the Soviet Union under general license. The Secretary of Commerce announced on January 11, 1980 his denial on national security grounds of eight license applications for export of high technology items to the Soviet Union.

When the review and revision of our policy on high technology and other strategic items is completed, I will submit a further report to the Congress concerning any additional controls that may be imposed.

Sincerely,

JIMMY CARTER

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